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Open Access Policy at the University of Rhode Island

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NETSL Lightning Talk Summary: Open Access Policy at the University of Rhode Island

[11 minutes]

[ANDREE]

- On March 21, the University of Rhode Island faculty voted unanimously for an Open Access Policy at URI
 - “Permissions-based” policy modeled on Harvard (2008)
 - Rather than just encouraging faculty to deposit their articles in the IR when publisher policy allows,
 - The OA policy uses copyright to allow authors to retain the right to deposit, regardless of publisher policy.
 - Faculty grant URI a non-exclusive license to exercise the copyright in their articles. This license survives even if faculty subsequently transfer copyright to a publisher.
 - Thus, the library has the right to deposit authors’ article manuscripts in DigitalCommons.
- Back Story
 - As Head of Acquisitions and former Serials / E-Resources Librarian
 - Years of journal price increases
 - Multiple serial cancellation projects
 - 2008 and 2009
 - 1200 titles
 - Almost \$650K out of a total materials budget of about \$3M.
 - Interested in scholarly communication reform and open access
 - Familiar with OA initiatives
 - Harvard-style policy
 - COPE [Compact for Open Access Publishing Equity] funds to pay author-side fees in gold OA journals
 - author rights model language for license agreements.
 - Had even reached out Provost’s Office about setting up a COPE fund at URI.
 - Also wanted to move toward an OA policy, but
 - Action not possible because — though we had DigitalCommons since July 2005 — had no one dedicated to developing it.
- Then, stars began to align in our favor
 - Last March, Julia began as our Digital Initiatives Librarian; so we finally had someone to develop DigitalCommons@URI.
 - Also last spring, one of our public services librarians, Peter Larsen, was elected as Chair of the URI Faculty Senate for this academic year.
 - Pledged to make Open Access a key agenda item for the Senate.
 - In late summer 2012, Peter formed the “Ad-Hoc Committee for Open Access,” with the charge to “look at some of the issues of Open Access in

scholarly communication, look at some solutions, and present suggestions as to what approach would best fit URI's needs and how that might be realized."

- I was appointed to convene the committee, which consisted of me, Julia, two faculty members, and the Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs.
- As de-facto Chair of the Committee and decided to follow URI's motto and "think big" by suggesting we endorse a Harvard-style OA Policy.
- The committee accepted the recommendation in November.

[JULIA]

- Meanwhile, Andree and Julia start doing outreach. The goal is **both** to promote DigitalCommons@URI and Open Access Policy at the same time:
 - Andrée writes to each faculty department chair and asks if we can come to a faculty meeting
 - Since she is a tenured faculty member and has been here a long time, she can be pushy while Julia plays the innocent newcomer
 - Often required repeated follow-up
 - Before the meeting, Andree sends out informational materials about the policy, which we have posted to the NETSL website: FAQ, URI OA Policy with Harvard policy, "Copyright and your scholarly work" handout
 - Over 6 months, we present to 19 departments/colleges. Digital Commons is what we talk about first to pique faculty interest. We send around a sign-up sheet for people to grant permission for retrospective articles
 - Faculty reception: Overall, very little pushback. Most common questions: Will this hurt journals? Will this cause my article to get rejected? Concerns from humanities faculty about use of articles in anthologies, translations, and other derivative works
 - With A LOT of help from Harvard's Stuart Shieber and Peter Suber, Andree was able to come up with good answers to questions and adapted Harvard's Terms of Use to satisfy URI's specific needs and meet faculty concerns
 - The policy ultimately passed unanimously in the Faculty Senate on March 21st
- What's next: Implementation & new roles for Technical Services
 - Now that we have the policy, implementation brings a lot more work for the library and specifically tech services
 - customizing Digital Commons
 - more outreach and communication with faculty
 - harvesting from other databases
 - getting our hands on author manuscripts and publisher PDFs and posting them

- tracking opt-out waivers and author assistance forms
 - communicating with publishers to inform them about the policy
- we plan to leverage students and staff members who already have relevant skills – for example, an Acquisitions staff member is already doing all of the searching and downloading of pub PDFs for retrospective collection
- “Lessons learned”
 - Main takeaway: It was easier than we anticipated! BUT Andree put in a huge amount of work up front, becoming expert in the policy, talking with Harvard experts, and being ready with good answers to frequently asked questions. Most faculty pushback seems to come from misunderstandings about the policy; if you can clearly explain how it works, they will be on board. It was important for us to have the flexibility to work beyond strict job descriptions (i.e. Acquisitions) to get that accomplished—and that will be important for staff working on the implementation as well.